



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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Former Background Investigator for Federal Government Pleads Guilty to Making a False Statement

Washington, D.C. - Nathaniel Walker, a 55-year-old former Special Agent of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management ("OPM"), who conducted federal background investigations, has pled guilty to one count of making a false statement, Acting U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips announced today. Walker, of Indianapolis, Indiana, entered his guilty plea earlier today in U.S. District Court before the Honorable Colleen Kollar-Kotelly. Walker is scheduled to be sentenced on March 18, 2010, and could face up to 16 months in prison under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines as a result of the guilty plea.

According to a factual proffer agreed to by Walker at the plea hearing, Walker was employed as a Special Agent of OPM and assigned to the Federal Investigative Services Division ("FISD"), where his job was to conduct federal background investigations. FISD, formerly known as the Center for Federal Investigative Services, is responsible for conducting background investigations for numerous federal agencies and their contractors, on individuals either employed by or seeking employment with those agencies or contractors. The purpose of the background investigations is to determine an individual's suitability for positions with access to classified information, that impact national security, or that require a security clearance.

In conducting background investigations, FISD investigators conduct interviews of individuals who have information about the person who is the subject of the background investigation. In addition, FISD investigators seek out, obtain, and review documentary evidence, such as employment records, to verify and corroborate information provided by either the subject of the background investigation or by persons interviewed during the investigation. After conducting interviews and obtaining documentary evidence, FISD investigators prepare a Report of Investigation ("ROI"), containing the results of the interviews and document reviews, and electronically submit the ROI to OPM in Washington, D.C. OPM then provides a copy of the investigative file to the requesting agency, which can use the information to determine an individual's eligibility for employment.

Between September 2005 and September 2006, in more than a dozen ROI's on background investigations, Walker represented that he had interviewed a source or reviewed a record regarding the subject of the background investigation when, in fact, he had not conducted the interview or obtained the records. For example, on September 2, 2005, in a ROI of a background investigation of J.S., Walker represented that he had interviewed P.M. about J.S. (and reported what P.M. had purportedly stated about J.S.), when, in fact, Walker had not interviewed P.M. On the same date, Walker electronically submitted his ROI to OPM on the background investigation of J.S., which contained this false representation.

Walker's false representations were material, as they influenced the government's decisions and activities with respect to the subjects of those background investigations. Walker's false representations have required FISD to reopen and rework numerous background investigations that were assigned to Walker during the time period of his falsifications, at an estimated cost of \$61,405.32 to the United States government.

In announcing the guilty plea, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips praised the hard work of Special Agents Derek M. Holt and Shantel Robinson, OPM, Office of the Inspector General, and Philip Kroop, Chief, Integrity Assurance Group, FISD. Mr. Phillips also acknowledged the efforts of Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ellen Chubin Epstein and Thomas E. Zeno, who investigated and prosecuted this matter.

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